

MEMO

To: The Interim Academic Senate

From: The Academic Senate Charter and By-Laws Task Force

-G. Derek Musgrove
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Re: Writing a new Charter and By-Laws

Date: September 3, 2009

Introduction:

Over the past several months the Bylaws Task Force has been working to write a Charter and By-Laws for the Academic Senate (AS). Attached are the results of our work.

Our task was to develop a succinct governance document that makes clear the AS's role in the academic decision making process, facilitates cooperation in the academic decision making process, and provides for the proper functioning of the AS into the foreseeable future.

We used the old University Senate Charter and Interim Academic Senate Charter as our templates. Keeping in mind the expressed interests of the faculty and of the Board / Administration, we borrowed where we believed appropriate. Additionally, we researched the charters and bylaws of comparable institutions (UMAB, Louisville, Northeastern, CUNY, and Drexel, among others) to ensure that we were within the industry mainstream.

We will not summarize the Charter and By-laws here. They are attached for your review. We will however, point out those things that are different from the University Senate and the Interim Academic Senate Charters and By-Laws:

- We have written a clear description of the AS's responsibilities and the process that must be undertaken to make academic changes.
- We have adopted term limits for Senators. Senators can only serve for one consecutive two year term. They can, however, be reelected after sitting out a term. Senator's terms will be staggered with half of the Senators elected in even years and the other half in odd years.
- We have included a clear Senate schedule which mandates at least one meeting per month for the academic year.
- We separated the charter and bylaws and provided clear guidelines for how to amend each.

In our deliberations we came upon two issues on which we had trouble coming to consensus. We therefore decided to bring them before the Senate membership for discussion. They were:

- the Secretary
- the timing of elections

All of the Task Force members have been impressed with Terri Jackson's handling of her duties as interim Academic Senate Secretary. As such, some of us came up with the idea of making the Secretary an appointed position. These task force members suggested that the Secretary could be an administrator appointed annually by the President in consultation with the Senate President. Others of us appreciated the utility of this plan but preferred to elect the Secretary from the Senate body rather than appoint him.

The second issue is the timing of elections. Some of us favored holding department elections for Senators in September (newly elected Senators take their seats in October); others in April (newly elected Senators take their seats in May). Some of us believed that the benefits of holding elections in April are that Senators have the summer to familiarize themselves with the office before the academic year begins. The down side of April elections, and conversely, the up side of September elections is that some faculty and administrators who serve in the spring do not return in the fall.

We look forward to a spirited discussion of these recommendations.

UDC ACADEMIC SENATE CHARTER

Preamble:

The Academic Senate of the University of the District of Columbia is part of the shared governance structure which is an essential right and responsibility of a scholarly community. It is a governing body with sufficient autonomy to assure academic integrity and to fulfill its responsibilities of policy and resource development consistent with the mission of the institution. Through duly constituted legislative processes, it provides for the exercise of the faculty's fundamental role in academic decisions, the implementation and preservation of academic standards, and promotion of the welfare of students. The interdependence and cooperation of administration, faculty and governing board are essential to legitimate and effective governance.

Name:

The Academic Senate ("AS")

Purpose and Responsibilities:

The Academic Senate shall be responsible for considering and deliberating about university standards, policies and programs and for making recommendations to the Provost and the President on matters including:

- Admission and retention of students;
- Award of degrees and certificates;
- Curricula, scholastic requirements, and academic programs; and
- Safeguarding of academic freedom.

Membership:

Voting membership shall be the following:

- One full-time faculty representative from each academic department or division, one faculty representative from the David A. Clarke School of Law, and one faculty representative from the Learning Resources Division.
- One faculty representative appointed by the President.
- One administrator appointed by the President.

- Three adjunct faculty recommended by the Council of Deans and appointed by the President, where no two appointees represent the same college or school.
- The President of the Undergraduate Student Government Association.
- The President of the Graduate Student Government Association.

Non-voting membership shall be the following, serving as *ex officio*:

- The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Officers:

- The Chair shall be elected from the full-time faculty representatives by majority vote of those present and eligible to vote, excluding abstentions, at the first fall semester meeting of the AS held for the election of officers, a quorum being present.
- The Vice-Chair shall be elected from the full-time faculty representatives by majority vote of those present and eligible to vote, excluding abstentions, at the first fall semester meeting of the AS held for the election of officers, a quorum being present.
- **The Secretary shall be elected from the members of the AS by majority vote of those present and eligible to vote, excluding abstentions, at the first fall semester meeting of the AS held for the election of officers, a quorum being present.**
- No member of the AS shall hold more than one office concurrently.
- The term of office shall be one year and vacancies shall be filled by special election and not exceed the term of the officer being replaced.
- An officer of the AS may be impeached by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the full voting membership.

Disposition of Academic Senate Actions:

All actions of the AS shall be approved by majority vote, a quorum being present, of a duly called and noticed meeting of the AS. Those actions shall be formally transmitted to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs in the form of recommendations for review and disposition.

The Provost shall forward relevant recommendations of the AS, along with comments deemed appropriate, to the President for review and disposition and shall report to the AS on the status and disposition of all recommendations.

Amendment Process:

Amendments to this Charter which are approved by the AS shall be presented to the Board of Trustees, through the Provost and President, for consideration and action.